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ABSTRACT

This report is the result of a study in the fall of 1971 of equivalency testing in English for entering freshmen in California state colleges. The author argues that equivalency testing must satisfy two conditions: (1) the tests should be college level ones, valid for their stated purposes and properly normed, and (2) the tests should be administered so that they help students develop their fullest individual capacities. Sections of the report discuss the strengths and weaknesses of objective testing and essay testing; how these tests could be used in order to meet the aims of Freshman English; the administration of the tests, including discussion of the proposed new College-Level Examination Board (CLEP) Freshman English Test for the fall of 1974 and a proposed CLEP examination in literature for the fall of 1973; the supervision and expense of grading the essays and the determination of passing scores, the use of the test scores, and the relationship between colleges and participating high schools. Three appendixes deal with the expense of essay reading, objective tests in English, and a list of specialists in English testing who contributed to this study. (DI)

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EQUIVALENCY TESTING IN COLLEGE FRESHMAN ENGLISH:

A Report and a Proposal

The English Council
of
The California State University and Colleges

October 1972

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PREFACE

By

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In the fall of 1971, the California State Colleges began large-scale equivalency testing for entering freshmen at two colleges, using tests developed by the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP). (This program, sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board [CEEB], is administered by the Educational Testing Service [ETS].) After the results had been publicized, serious professional evaluation of the validity, scoring, and administration of the tests began among the faculties; the State College English Council raised a number of objections to the English Composition General Examination in particular, as well as to various aspects of the program in general. The Chancellor's Office proved receptive to the English Council's objections, and to other questions raised by a series of statewide committees and subcommittees that have considered the Fall 1971 program. In late spring of 1972, the Chancellor's Office agreed to support a summer study to be undertaken by a committee of the English Council, to investigate equivalency testing in the area of English and to recommend an appropriate program for use by the now renamed State University and Colleges.

This report is the result of that study. It is not exhaustive, since such a task in this area would have demanded far more time and support than was available. It is an attempt to focus the major issues in such a way as to point to their solution, and it recommends a method of equivalency testing in English which is responsive to our discipline and practical to implement.

This report has passed through a series of drafts and presentations which have made it, in its present form, an expression of the best thinking of the English Council as a whole--perhaps even of the English profession as a whole. Since Spring 1972, when the Council directed me to prepare this report, I have consulted widely with English department and freshman English chairmen throughout California, and have corresponded, sometimes at considerable length, with over two dozen specialists in the field elsewhere in the United States and in England. I have kept citations to a minimum throughout the report, which is written for laymen as well as for the professional, so I must thank here the many teachers, writers, and scholars whose published work and whose substantial and thoughtful letters to me have contributed to our findings. I owe a particular debt to Professor Jess Ritter of California State University, San Francisco, who worked closely with me throughout the study, and to Dr. Albert Serling, Program Director for CLEP, who spent a week in San Bernardino to give us the benefit of his wide experience. The English department chairmen and faculty who participated in the Southern California Advisory Meeting, August 3, 1972, and in the Northern California Advisory Meeting, September 14, 1972, will notice the many improvements made in the report as a result of their suggestions. I am also grateful for the advice given me by William Schaefer, Executive Secretary of the Modern Language Association; Robert Hogan, Executive Secretary of the National Council of Teachers of English; and most particularly Michael Shugrue, Executive Secretary of the Association of Departments of English, who first helped me discover where to turn to dispel my previous condition of happy ignorance about the entire area of testing in English.

1. EQUIVALENCY TESTING: The Central Issue

Equivalency testing has become common practice in higher education, and has long been widely accepted, at least in theory, in English departments. All but two of the forty-six four-year California colleges and universities responding to the 1971 Association of Departments of English Freshman English Survey, for instance, indicated that there was a way to exempt students from freshman English at their institutions. In addition, the Advanced Placement Program, also administered by ETS for CEEB, is widely accepted as equivalent to college work; a score of 3, 4, or 5 is accepted as six semester units of college credit throughout the State University and College system. (See a memo entitled "Systemwide Policy on Advanced Placement and Credit" sent by Vice Chancellor Langsdorf to all State College Presidents, June 16, 1971.)

But only recently has equivalency testing been open to very large numbers of students. Advanced Placement candidates, for instance, are relatively few in number, able and ambitious students, from a limited number of secondary schools; they enroll in specialized courses, and generally perform better than college and university students on their examinations and in their subsequent college work. Nonetheless, AP originally encountered considerable faculty resistance, and has become widely established and accepted only within the last decade. The CLEP program has greatly expanded opportunities for college credit by examination and hence has once again focused attention on the major theoretical issue raised by such credit. But since such large numbers are involved, the arguments have become particularly heated.

Those who argue for such testing assert that it benefits the individual. No one should be asked to repeat work in college that he has mastered; he should receive credit for what he knows and proceed to appropriate levels of learning.

Those who argue against such testing also assert that the needs of the individual are primary. To substitute mechanical tests of competency for the individual search for excellence is in fact to cheat the student of possibilities for individual growth.

These arguments, which can be and have been developed at great length, and which lead to rhetorical heights of passion, point to the practical weaknesses in both positions. Certainly college courses ought not to be rote repetition of what is already known, and certainly equivalency testing ought to lead to more advanced learning. When faculty argue against equivalency testing without much knowledge of available tests, or when testing people proclaim the uselessness of college course work without knowledge of the innovations and expansion of freshman studies, the conflict becomes severe. (In an article on CLEP, The College Board News, May 1972, claims the five general examinations afford freshmen "the opportunity to eliminate one entire year of study and expense," which is a strange and sad way to speak of what is available in higher education.) There is plenty of blame to go around for a quarrel which is essentially foolish, and for which students and higher education in general must suffer.

As in so many heated theoretical arguments, both sides are right, since they are talking about different things. Some of the tests that have been used are in fact poor and invalid; no one sensible defends them. Some college courses have apparently not been worth the taking; no one really defends them. But we need not and should not take extreme positions. No one could argue against a program of equivalency testing that satisfies these two conditions:

1) the tests must be in fact college level ones, valid for their stated purposes, and properly normed--in short the tests must gain academic respectability similar to that won by the Advanced Placement program, and

2) the purpose of the tests must be so clearly seen that no one can take them as a way to cheat students of their education by huddling them through credits to save cash; the tests need to be administered so that they in fact help students develop their fullest individual capacities.

Everyone stands to benefit from equivalency testing responsibly done.

2. EQUIVALENCY TESTING IN FRESHMAN ENGLISH

The issues discussed in Section One are more or less applicable to all fields of study, but they are most pronounced in the area of freshman English.

It is no wonder that equivalency testing in freshman English is a long-standing problem. The course itself is a long-standing problem, nationwide. It is the most widely required college course (in 1970, 93.2 percent of all four-year colleges and universities required at least one term of English), and a million or more students enroll in freshman English each year in this country. Yet there is relatively little agreement nationwide about what should be in such a course; while the most generally accepted intention is to improve students' abi y to write, English teachers now use a large number of different approaches, none of which is demonstrably certain of success. Since the course is itself in such an unsettled state, it is no wonder that so many of the testing programs are confused in purpose and in content.

The sharpest problem for freshman English courses is one that relates directly to the issue that divides us about equivalency testing: is the objective of the course some kind of minimum competence, what Albert Kitzhaber called "immediate therapy for students whose academic future is clouded by their inability to manage the written form of English"? Or is the primary purpose "to focus the student's attention on fundamental principles of clear thinking and effective expression of that thinking" (Albert Kitzhaber, Themes, Theories, and Therapy, 1963, pp. 2, 3.). The view of English as "therapy," as fulfilling its function by imparting correct spelling and other conventional forms of expression, is widely held outside of the profession and even by 48.9 percent of the English departments in the United States (according to Thomas Wilcox, reporting on The National Survey of Undergraduate Programs in English, in College English, 6 [March 1972], 688). This is the view of freshman English assumed by most placement tests, with their heavy stress on error-hunting and supposedly correct expression. But over half the profession nationwide and all the English departments in the California State University and College system reject this vision of freshman English, in favor of Kitzhaber's second view. Correct knowledge of formal English, valuable as it is for many purposes, is not all that is taught in our classes; hence such knowledge is not alone sufficient for equivalency. Our freshman English courses are more concerned with developing an awareness of the various levels of usage, which are appropriate to various situations, than in abstract notions of correctness; and we are far more interested in helping students develop and test ideas in writing than in maintaining the supposed purity of the tongue.

Since freshman English has such varying objectives and definitions, we should not expect any single national test, however reputable, to satisfy

the profession as a whole. We, however, need to insist that tests designed to examine minimal competence in mechanics, even when they are sound, do not do more than touch the periphery of our courses. And we need to define as clearly as possible the objectives of our courses so that better testing programs can emerge. For reasons discussed in Section Five below, the nineteen institutions in our system have been able to come up with a far greater sense of agreement about objectives than has been possible nationwide.

3. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF OBJECTIVE TESTING

The whole issue of objective testing is so complex, and so much research has been done on it, that to summarize the research risks superficialty and error. Most of the research on this question has been done by the Educational Testing Service, which has been giving English tests to large numbers of students since it was established in 1948. Several general conclusions emerge from the various reports produced by the highly capable scholars ETS has employed in this area:

1) Only those who know little about testing have unlimited faith in test scores; the specialists are well aware of the limitations and fallibility of any kind of test, and

2) the best test in composition will combine the most reliable elements of both objective and essay testing.

All evidence shows that both kinds of tests have important strengths and serious weaknesses; it is important to state here that there is no necessary conflict between essay and objective tests. We would, in fact, argue strongly against any equivalency testing in freshman English that did not include both.

Here are five conclusions that we support in the area of objective testing in freshman English:

A. Most of the objective tests available are poor, some scandalously so. We should not succumb to the feeling that people who make up tests must know what is going on in the field of English; many of them don't. Anyone with knowledge of modern linguistics or dialectology, for instance, would find some of the routine questions about "correctness" or the locating of supposed errors quite absurd. As one reads through test after test, he becomes convinced that the principal skill tested, repeatedly, is the ability to take tests, that is, the ability to discern the point of view of the test maker, and hence to guess shrewdly the "right" answer. No wonder the results on such tests correlate nicely with success in school, which is, after all, normally based on the same skill.

In short, the well-known deficiencies of multiple-choice testing still weaken most such tests. Here, for one example, is a question from one of the newest and most popular tests in English composition (slightly changed to avoid copyright difficulties); it illustrates the typical bad question still being written:

> English speaking musicians use professionally large numbers of words from which one of the following languages?
>
> a. German
> b. French
> c. Spanish
> d. Latin
> e. Italian

The test makers are obviously looking in this question for a scrap of information about the ways in which English uses foreign

words, in this case the Italian vocabulary for some aspects of musical notation. Some students may in fact pick up such information in a composition course, though it seems unlikely; but the student most able to fill in the proper square is likely to be the one whose parents wanted to and could afford to give him music lessons as a child. Those not so privileged (including, no doubt, some fine musicians) are not likely to know the answer, regardless of their writing ability. And someone who knew too much--say a specialist in medieval music--might even give the "wrong" answer, Latin.

At the same time, a few objective tests are noticeably better than the rest, and we ought to guard against uninformed judgements about all objective testing. Sometimes committees responsible for developing a test are wholly informed and up-to-date--sometimes, indeed, they are leaders in the field--and the test itself is sometimes reviewed with such elaborate care that the routine problems of objective testing are largely or wholly removed.

B. Writing ability is a highly complex combination of many skills; objective tests measure some skills analogous to and involved in writing, but can not measure all such skills and hence can never be wholly valid. We ought to distrust any objective test that claims to test writing ability in its entirety, and we should inquire suspiciously into the validity of such claims. On the other hand, there are skills which are closely connected with writing ability (for example, size and accuracy of vocabulary, or reading comprehension) which can be measured objectively with a high degree of reliability. We can and should demand that any objective test

we use examine particular skills with demonstrated validity, that it be free from the obvious flaws of such tests, such as social bias and ambiguity, and that it not advertise itself as testing more than it in fact does test.

C. Within some important limitations, objective testing can be a highly reliable and economical method of measuring achievement. Dr. Paul Diederich, Senior Research Associate at ETS, and one of the most experienced scholars in the country on English testing, writes that he usually expects, when measuring a single test against a reliable series of writing evaluations, "a correlation of about .65 with a good reading test, .55 with an objective test of writing skills, and .45 with grades on an essay given by trained readers under close supervision." These are discouraging figures: a correlation below .30 approaches irrelevance; professional designers of objective tests aim for .90 and are distinctly unhappy below .80. But we must recognize the fact, demonstrated repeatedly, that one good objective test will correlate more highly with a student's writing ability (using a series of writing samples as a base) than will one good essay test. This is a convincing argument that the equivalency test we approve should contain an objective section.

D. Since objective tests do not test writing ability directly, but only a few skills that are part of or associated with it, no objective test should be used alone as a measure of writing ability. It is essential that an essay be part of any writing equivalency test that seeks to measure college-level skill.

Everyone, even the most avid defender of objective testing, knows that some students can do well, or at least passably, on objective tests in writing and yet write abominably. In addition, whenever impersonal testing occurs, there are bound to be occasional instances of cheating, impersonation, and other outrages endemic to a test-oriented society. For these very practical reasons, essay tests are needed to increase the validity and security of the whole testing process.

E. Every English teacher's experience that writing ability is closely akin to reading ability is borne out by correlation studies. (Note that Paul Diederich, as cited above, expects a higher correlation with writing ability from an objective reading test than from an objective writing test. ETS reports tend to confirm his expectation.) This finding supports the common practice of spending much time in freshman English on careful analytic reading of all kinds of writing, including, but not restricted to, imaginative literature. Capable writers are almost always capable readers, and it is reasonable to expect that careful training in reading will help the development of writing ability. Since writing and reading are generally linked in the course work, and improved reading ability is a normal objective of freshman English, a test designed to give college credit in the course must include a substantial reading component. It appears possible to test reading ability with some accuracy by objective examination, and it appears possible to test general reading ability at least in part by the use of a valid and reliable general literature examination. But we must be careful that any reading

test we use is college-level and substantive. It is simpler to ask for the correct spelling of Shakespeare's name (though Shakespeare himself would not know) than to obtain and evaluate a response to King Lear's changing relationship to his daughter Cordelia.

4. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF ESSAY TESTING

We ought to have no illusions about the reliability of essay testing. To be sure, it is the criterion of writing ability; it is the only way to see the real thing. Nonetheless, such tests have many important problems of which we need to be aware.

Perhaps the most significant problem for the reliability of essay tests is the large difference in quality of the essays written by a single student. Yesterday's paper is noticeably worse, or better, than today's and, of today's papers, the one on topic A is far superior to that on topic F. An essay does not measure writing ability as an abstract quality, but a student's ability to write on a certain topic on a certain day under test conditions. It is certainly conceivable that the student whose failing paper you may have read last night could have handed in his paper with a bored sigh of relief, and gone home to write his girlfriend in Cucamonga a witty, intelligent, mechanically accurate analysis of the test he had suffered through and of the agonies of the professor who would have to evaluate it.

The second most important problem is the difficulty in achieving reliable grading of essay tests. Even under the most carefully controlled and supervised reading conditions, it is hard to find readers who agree consistently about the quality of given essays. And the studies analyzing results under more usual circumstances, when students are writing on different topics, and when we know the identity of the writers, are really depressing.

But it is possible to establish testing and grading conditions to bring the reliability of essay testing to a useful point. It is clear that, as the ETS publication The Measurement of Writing Ability (1966) states, "The combination of objective items (which measure accurately some skills involved in writing) with an essay (which measures directly, if somewhat less accurately, the writing itself) proved to be more valid than either type of item alone."

Finally, it is educationally necessary to require a student to write during any test of writing. We need to validate objective testing by guarding against students who may have learned to perform well on tests, but who cannot write competently. Suppose we were to choose a simple, well-constructed spelling test as the equivalency examination (we won't, of course). The first time we used it, the results might well be acceptable; most (but certainly not all) good writers happen to be pretty good spellers. But the next time, those students who did not "waste" their school years writing, but instead studied spelling, would greatly improve their scores. In time, the exam might well stimulate mindless cramming and devalue the writing act itself. This would be the effect whatever combination of skills a non-essay test might examine; unless we include an essay test in our examination, we run the danger of defining writing as not-writing, and this would be a position without validity or integrity.

5. EQUIVALENCY TESTING IN FRESHMAN ENGLISH IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE SYSTEM

Conditions are favorable for the development of a responsible and accessible equivalency test in freshman English within the California State University and College system. Not only is the administration of the system on record as urging such testing in general, but the English Council itself has endorsed it in principle. In addition, some of the

problems we have listed in relation to freshman English courses and to testing in these courses are much more easily resolved within the system than on a nationwide basis.

For example, the contributions of the English Council to communication among the college departments has led to some general agreement about the objectives of freshman English in our institutions. Again, for various reasons, the English departments of the State University and Colleges have tended to devote a substantial portion of their time and some of their best energies to the development of freshman English. Hence, the nationwide neglect and fragmentation of such courses has not been a major matter here; indeed creative experimentation, innovation, and the development of new materials in such courses have marked our recent history.

The relative ease of communication among the 19 institutions, the general seriousness and spirit of innovation with which we approach the course, and the substantial size of our combined student bodies all argue for the possibility of a well-planned and appropriately financed examination that could have nationwide implications. Indeed, the importance of what we are here undertaking has not escaped the notice of ETS and CEEB; they have given strong assurances that the two organizations will bring their resources, experience, and knowledge to help us accomplish aims so consistent with their public position on credit-by-examination. The College-Level Examination Program has run into some important opposition from faculties, most particularly faculties in English and mathematics, numbers of whom have found the general examinations in these areas unacceptable. In response, ETS and CEEB have recommended various uses of subject examinations in these areas and are developing new examinations in both fields. Those responsibile for CLEP are determined to regain the confidence of these faculties.

We stand to benefit from a strong working relationship with ETS, which has done most of the valuable research in testing in our field, since this accumulated expertise (though by no means infallible) is an invaluable resource.

The testing program we recommend has four features to it, each of which is discussed below: A) A coherent statement of the aims and objectives of freshman English, B) A test, including both objective and essay parts, which is demonstrably responsive to these aims, calls for an appropriate college level of proficiency, and is valid and reliable, C) Administration of the test reliably and professionally, and D) Professional and sensitive use of test results. Such a program is not only academically sound, but financially and technically practical; we propose it go into operation for the fall of 1973, with initial testing to begin as early as spring 1973.

A. Aims and objectives of freshman English

Freshman English calls for development of reading and writing ability--including the effective uses of reference and resource materials--as well as the acquisition of knowledge about the English language. A student should demonstrate the college-level ability

1. to recognize and use appropriate language (rather than merely to classify "errors"),
2. to recognize and use the basic processes of clear thought and clear communication, and
3. to read expository and imaginative writing with understanding.

B. The Test: Objective and Essay

The test should contain both essay and objective parts. Six semester units of lower division credit, or its equivalent,

should be given for successful completion of an examination of 3 hours, consisting of 90 minutes of objective testing and 90 minutes of a carefully designed essay test.

C. Administration of the test

1. Proposed new CLEP Freshman English Test: Fall, 1974

We have great hopes that the proposed new CLEP Freshman English Subject Examination will be satisfactory for our purposes. We have confidence in the committee of examiners devising the test (Richard Braddock, University of Iowa; Greg Cowan, Forest Park Community College, Missouri; Marianne Davis, Benedict College, South Carolina; and Walker Gibson, University of Massachusetts) and respect the committee's statements about what it is seeking to accomplish. In addition, we have examined six 45-minute pretests containing approximately 450 questions written by college English teachers to the specifications of that committee. These pretests constitute an item pool from which about 200 questions will be drawn to yield two editions of 90-minute CLEP multiple choice subject examinations. On the following page are the test specifications developed by the committee of examiners. The questions on the pretests seem specifically designed to avoid the usual faults of short-answer testing, and seem generally to examine the kinds of skills we have agreed are among our most important objectives.

In addition the new CLEP freshman English test includes a 90-minute optional essay section which we can and should require. The committee preferred a required essay section

CONTENT / SKILLS	I. 40 M/C Q. Reading for Meaning (Exposition, Poetry, Prose)		II. 40 M/C Q. Manipulation of Language (Diction, Semantics, Syntax, etc.)		III. 40 M/C Q. Editing and Writing Ability Library and Research (Methods - Modes of Writing)		TOTAL
A. Knowledge	10	Kinds of organization and development - logical, etc. Facts about form.	10	Sentence sense and forms, functions of words in contexts.	5	Dictionary and Research skills. Reference sources. Language styles.	25
B. Comprehension	10	Basic content - Understanding ideas and implications - themes and facts.	10	Meaning of locutions and utterances, grasping analogies, comps. and contrasts, etc.	5	Organization, and Development of paragraphs, meaning and point of view.	25
C. Application			5	Reasoning from the specific to the general - conslusions and deductions.	15	Unity, Coherence and Emphasis. Use of editorial concepts applied to sample writing.	20
D. Analysis	10	Tone, figures of speech, identification of voice, purpose and audience.	5	Identification of relationships of words and phrases.	15	Tone-audience-suitability of language to purpose - grammar and usage.	30
E. Synthesis	10	Judgments about effectiveness, style and form.	10	Making inferences and judgments about form and meaning of words in contexts.			20
	6 passages, 2 each (Exp., Prose, Poetry) Contemporary, relevant materials 6 to 8 items per passage 100 - 300 words/passage		Majority discrete questions - Some sets of 2 or 3 on common stimulus - Model sentences, etc.		Simulated student's writing - 4 or 5 passages with 4-5 items each. Remainder - discrete items based on short stimulus.		120

as part of the test itself, but CLEP's policy is to let the decision on requiring the essay rest with the institutional score recipient. Everyone involved in creating the test agrees upon the value of the essay, however. Here is the policy of the CLEP program in relation to essay testing for the new CLEP Freshman English Test (exerpted, with permission, from an ETS memorandum dated July 14, 1972):

"The CLEP Program can offer a most positive alternative in the special case of this new freshman English test. This will permit and promote the careful, rational use of the optional essay section without penalizing those candidates whose essays would be misused or ignored:

> "(1) If the committee makes its strongest possible recommendation urging recipient English departments to require the essay, the program will develop and distribute widely a special publication, aimed at college faculty members and departments, that will highlight the committee's recommendation. Colleges accross the country are in the process of developing policies of credit by examination through CLEP. A strong recommendation by the committee that this test is incomplete without a carefully prepared and graded essay should be, we think will be, welcomed by most recipients of scores. These schools can, should, and will in turn make it clear to individuals seeking credit that the essay <u>is required by the recipient institution</u>."

We expect to follow the development of this new test with keen interest, and are prepared to recommend its use if it fulfills its promise. We will seek to be included in the norming studies for objective portions of this test in the spring of 1973, and we will explore ways to conduct concomitant

norming of the optional essay section for students in our system. We have been assured by the Director of the CLEP program that the program will make tests available to us for these purposes at no charge, and will assist us in our validity studies. Unfortunately, while CLEP designs and provides for an optional essay, the receiving institutions must themselves provide for the grading of the essay question. Therefore, funding from the California State University and College budget will be needed in the 1972-73 fiscal year to establish an organization to read and evaluate essays for this test (or, indeed, for any other); this arrangement must be carefully and professionally set up, so as to assure the reliability and validity of the entire program. We expect to be able to draw upon California faculty experienced in AP and other organized essay grading efforts to assure the professional caliber of this essential operation; ETS specialists in this area stand ready to assist us.

However, because of the elaborate evaluation this new CLEP test will undergo, it will not be available for our use in September 1973. We thus need to choose an acceptable alternative for the year ahead, even as we watch the development of what may well be a CLEP test we can accept without qualms.

2. Analysis and Interpretation of Literature: Fall 1973

We recommend the following as a responsible short-term solution for the 1973-74 academic year only:

A three-hour examination consisting of the 90-minute objective CLEP Subject Examination, Analysis and Interpretation of Literature, and either its 90-minute essay section or one of our own devising.

The disadvantage of this short-term solution is that the test does not deal with composition aside from literature, and that no norms have been developed specifically for our student population.

The advantages of this proposal, however, are important:

a. The test exists, and has been well received throughout the country and within our system. It contains a highly reliable and valid objective test (according to the elaborate studies conducted by ETS), which will serve the necessary measurement function of the objective portion of our test.

b. The Literature test, while not ideally suited for all aspects of freshman English, is skewed in the direction of rigor rather than ease. It is a college level examination.

c. Reading skill correlates closely with writing skill, and this carefully constructed reading test, along with a 90-minute essay test, is more appropriate for our short-term use than any objective so-called composition test.

d. Two new, up-to-date, editions of this test will be available for our use in 1973. These new editions will improve an already impressive test.

e. CLEP has no objections to substituting an essay test of our own devising for the essays on literature now part of the examination. We can select appropriate essay questions for our purposes as the testing date

approaches, or we can accept those prepared by the CLEP committee (William Vesterman, Rutgers University; W. O. S. Sutherland, University of Texas; Mary Rion Hove, St. Olaf College) with the advice of the ETS test specialists.

3. Essay Grading: Supervision and Expenses

We resolve that the English Council will select a committee with continuing responsibility for supervision of the testing program. We need further reports on the development of the new CLEP Freshman English test, and since there is no national grading system for CLEP essays, we need to supervise the entire process of essay grading.

We propose that the English Council, funded through the Chancellor's Office, take responsibility for evaluating the student essays written for course equivalency in English. We can as a body ensure the integrity, consistency, and quality of essay grading far better than can any other office. Since essay grading is complex and expensive, it is bound to be vulnerable; under our direction it will be less assailable, less costly, and more reliable than any but a national system such as used by AP.

The cost of reliably grading large numbers of essays is not prohibitive (about $6.00 per exam, based on tentative estimates of costs shown in Appendix I); when measured against the potential savings for students and the system, and when placed against enhanced recruitment of able students, this expenditure in fact becomes a great bargain.

The cost of developing the examinations we recommend are being borne by CEEB; the cost of taking the examination is borne by the candidate seeking credit; the costs of scoring, reporting, and transcript service for the objective test are provided by ETS; the cost of scoring and using the essay section of the test needs to be provided by the State of California. During the 1972-73 fiscal year, this cost should, we suggest, be paid by the fund for innovative programs. But after the 1972-73 fiscal year, the faculty staffing formula should provide for the program, which obviously calls for continuing attention from the English Council and for maintaining a pool of trained readers. We hope that costs of grading can be reduced, as we gain experience; it may be that the scores on the objective test will be so valid for our purposes that papers of those on the upper and lower end of the scale will not need to be read.

See Appendix I for a tentative budget, tabulating the anticipated expense of grading 5,000 90-minute essay tests.

4. Passing Scores

We accept the recommendation of the independent Council on College-Level Examinations for the acceptable passing score on the objective part of the test. The Council recommends credit be granted for scores at or above the mean score for C students on the CLEP national norm. For the Analysis and Interpretation of Literature tests, that is a score of 49 or roughly the 50th percentile. (We may wish to use a California rather than a national mean score, when such local norming

takes place.) The essay test will need to be scaled by the chief reader and his assistants after the scoring has been done, and the two scores combined.

5. The Use of Test Scores

The use of test results requires careful attention and planning. Those who have passed the test and received credit for the college course work should be fully informed of the value of what they have achieved in academic and developmental terms--not merely mechanical or financial language; they should be urged to take more advanced work in English in order to develop their capacities further. Thus the placement value of this kind of testing should be exploited, even if course equivalency is the major purpose.

The individual colleges and universities should also retain flexibility in the use of test results, even if credit is granted systemwide. A student who does not succeed in passing the equivalency examination may wish to apply for a challenge examination at his own institution; he should have the opportunity to do so, if the institution wishes to continue offering such tests on a local basis.

The student should have the option of how he will use credit gained by examination. The experience of AP students is illustrative in this regard; these students, with their head start, take more college units than do students without AP credit. Certainly, careful and sensitive counseling, advisement, and

guidance are essential to this program, and not only for those likely to be successful in it. Those with little chance of success ought not to be encouraged to take tests covering college-level work they do not know; those succeeding at the tests should be encouraged and guided in their self-motivated quest for learning. Decisions, however, must always rest with the student, and each institution should seek to develop appropriate ways to help the student decide wisely.

6. The Colleges and the Schools

Since it is not to be expected that most, or even many, high school graduates will in fact have accomplished college-level work in English, without special training, no equivalency test program is complete without close liaison between the colleges granting credit and the schools. For a college-level equivalency program to succeed for more than a few individuals with unusual training or talents, the high schools will need help and support in providing formal college-level opportunities for all students who may profit from such opportunities. Such an innovative approach requires not only subject field communication between the colleges and the schools, but also a deliberate program of action on the part of the Chancellor's Office and the State Department of Education. We urge those agencies to initiate and foster a large-scale effort to assist the schools in establishing appropriate curricular offerings, so that the equivalency program we recommend can in fact be open to all potentially qualified students.

6. HOW EQUIVALENT IS EQUIVALENCY?

Even as we endorse equivalency examinations and proceed in all good faith to administer them, we need to reassert the value of our freshman English programs. After all, only a small percentage of our entering freshmen are likely to have learned college level skills in our field, and even some of those receiving credit may well seek to take freshman English in order to receive the less measurable benefits of the course.

Freshman English, as well as many other college courses, offers various experiences that have little to do with measurable skills, and yet that can be of great educational value to students. For example, as Thomas Wilcox puts it, "The English class may offer the freshman his only opportunity to participate in the free exchange of ideas and confer with a professional intellectual. This may be the best reason for limiting the size of freshman English classes and, indeed, the chief justification of freshman English itself." At a time when humanizing higher education has become much more than a slogan, we should not overlook the humanizing effect of a good freshman English course. "Students often testify, as they look back, that their freshman English course first brought their minds to life.... Because freshman English classes are still relatively small in most institutions, the instructor is often able to provide individual help for the student; he often becomes a counselor as well as a teacher, just because he is less remote than the lecturer in the large introductory courses." (Robert Gorrell, "Freshman Composition," The College Teaching of English, ed. John Gerber [New York,] 1965, p. 92)

If equivalency becomes one more mechanical device to turn education into processing, we will have done our students and our society a significant disservice, even if we have saved them some cash.

If equivalency becomes a simple matter of certifying minimal competency, without a concomitant push for achievement of individual excellence, we will have denied our mission.

We need to hold fast to our purpose as educators of individual students, even as we must get involved in the machinery of testing for units. The surest way for us to keep equivalency testing to its stated purpose of fostering and individualizing education in our field is for us to supervise directly a responsible professional program such as the one we here propose. Our aim, after all, is to help students educate themselves; we should expect that students will continue to come to us for the best we have to offer, and we can certify their achievements in various ways. Equivalency test scores may well be equivalent to our course grades, but the full and rich experience of language and literature, however measured, has no equivalency.

EXPENSE OF ESSAY READING

Following are estimates of the expense of reading with reasonable reliability 5,000 90-minute examinations, each composed of three separate essay questions. These estimates assume the following:

a. Three independent readings will be given each paper (one reading for each question).

b. Five minutes of reading time will be required to score each essay or a total of 15 minutes for each test.

c. Six tables of eight readers and one table leader each will be required for the reading; two tables for each question.

d. Each reader will receive an honorarium of $300 for 4½ days of work; each table leader will receive $350 for 5 days work.

e. An experienced chief reader will organize and direct the reading; $1,000 should cover his honorarium, travel, and expenses.

Honoraria (48 readers @ $300 and 6 table leaders @ $350)	$16,500
Per Diem (Housing and meals @ $22 per day)	5,412
Transportation (Average $50)	2,700
Chief Reader (Honorarium and expenses)	1,000
Clerical and Data Processing (Combining the 3 separate scores; combining the total essay and objective test scores; weighting scores appropriately, etc.)	5,000
TOTAL	$30,612

Appendix II

OBJECTIVE TESTS IN FRESHMAN ENGLISH

The following objective tests were made available by publishers for examination by the writers of this report. The College Proficiency Examination Program (CPEP) Examinations created and used by the University of the State of New York, were not made available; there are, no doubt, other tests in use, or *in potentia*, that we have not seen. We did, however, attempt to examine every widely available test designed for freshman English.

American Guidance Service, Circle Pines, Minnesota

- Essentials of English Test (forms A and B), by Dora V. Smith and Constance M. McCullough, rev. 1961 by Carolyn Greene

Bobbs-Merrill, New York

- Analytic Survey Test in English Fundamentals (form 4), by J. Helen Campbell and Walter Scribner Guiler

Bureau of Educational Measurements, Emporia, Kansas

- Barrett-Ryan English Test (forms I, II, III, VI, 1948, 1954)
- Barrett-Ryan-Schrammel English Test (forms EM, DM)
- Hoskins-Sanders Literature Test (forms A, B)
- Walton-Sanders English Test (Test I, form B; Test II, forms A, B)

Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey

- CLEP General Examination, English Composition
- CLEP Subject Examinations
  - English Composition
  - American Literature
  - English Literature
  - Analysis and Interpretation of Literature (six forms)
  - Freshman English (six pretests)
- Undergraduate Program (UP)
  - Literature Test
  - European and American Literature Test (modular complement to the Literature Test)
- Cooperative English Tests (forms 1A and PM)

Harcourt, Brace and World; New York

- Missouri College English Test, by Robert Callis and Willoughby Johnson (form B)

Houghton, Mifflin, Co.; Boston, Massachusetts

The New Purdue Placement Test in English (forms D and E), by G. S. Wykoff, J. H. McKee, and H. H. Remmers

McGraw-Hill, Monterey, California

Test of English Usage (form A), by Henry D. Rinsland, Raymond W. Pence, Betty Beck and Roland Beck

Educational Skills Tests, College Edition: English (form A)

Psychometric Affiliates, Brookport, Illinois

College English Test (forms A and B), by A. C. Jordan

Appendix III

LIST OF CORRESPONDENTS

The authors of this report are particularly grateful to the following specialists in the field of testing in English, for their detailed and valuable letters. If the report is valuable to the profession as a whole, it will be in large part due to the participation of the profession as a whole.

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